1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
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In the night I thought of my dead boys;
They called me "Mother!"
I thought I was alone, and had no children.
I remembered my daughters,
But they were far away among the white people.
My children have come back.
My heart is like the young plantain-leaf,
That shoots out when the sun shines.

535 ●

DANCES.—Dancing (M.: *dans pulaya*,[42] T.: *dans pulnin;* P.: *ahanini, danis pulnini;* U.: *ahanaka*) is practically limited to the various festivals and had perhaps originally a religious significance. Certain rejoicings of the Miskito, at which dancing takes place, are called *li-aikas* (lit.: "black water"), and others are known by the name *plamana;* the latter are celebrated in honor of some one who is leaving for a long journey.

The women perform individual dances which do not lack a certain *grace; they place the hands upon the shoulders or the head and make* various contortions of the body as they walk or jump around.

535 177

Some dances of rejoicing have been introduced by the Negroes or Creoles, and are performed chiefly around Christmas, which is considered a period of merrymaking by all these Indians, whether evangelized or not. The festivities last about two weeks. A great circle is formed with men and women alternating and joining hands or placing the right hand upon the left shoulder of their neighbor; in the center are seated one or two men beating drums, and at the rhythm the circle moves around.

538

STORY-TELLING.—The telling of stories is one of the favorite ways of passing the long hours at night before going to bed. The old Miskito, who lived under the good old days of the "Mosquito Kingdom," are always glad to talk of their armed expeditions into the "Spaniard's" country (Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica), and to relate some bizarre exploits in connection with those wars. The Indians can relate an occurrence in the most animated manner, but they do not seem to invent tales or stories as do the Negroes.

When the Indian has returned from a hunting or fishing expedition he delights in giving a most detailed account of everything he noticed in the course of the day, even if nothing out of the ordinary occurred. He will give all the particulars regarding the game he saw, and relate in a most tedious manner how he succeeded in outwitting it and getting within gunshot of it. The narrator may keep on in this manner for hours, while his patient listeners occasionally interpolate an exclamation denoting their astonishment, surprise, doubt, agreement, or comprehension.

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[42] The word *dans* or *danis* is taken from the English.

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
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Occasionally both sexes

765 perform very "tame" dances which they have apparently learned
535 from the foreigners.[1] One dance, which does not lack a certain grace, is performed by the young women, forming a half circle. They place the left arm around the neck of their neighbor and perform slow movements of the body to the rhythm of calabash rattles which they hold in the right hand. Occasionally they utter a soft melancholy song.

765 Several young men are continually playing reed flutes or flageolets
533 (*bra*), while others beat a skin membrane drum (*kuśbi*) with the palm of the hand. Most of the "music" performed consists of conventional imitations of the voice of animals or birds; the dancers accompany it by imitating the gait or the actions of the particular animal or bird.

765 Toward midnight two or three old men play on very long, stout bamboo flutes, which produce such an unearthly noise as to really scare a stranger. These instruments are said to be blown in order to direct to the feast two or three masqueraded figures which are supposed to come from the forest. As soon as the latter approach the hut all the women run inside, for they are not supposed to see them. The relatives of the deceased person immediately cover their faces with a cloth and then begin to lament and cry, for the masqueraded persons have some connection with the departed one. They try to injure themselves by knocking the head against the house posts, or by inflicting wounds on themselves with the aid of arms, rocks, or other objects, but the guests intercede and prevent them from harming themselves in a serious way. At a *sikro* on Rio Plátano I was witness when an old woman made a deep cut in her arm with the aid of an old, rusty machete. The maskers walk a few times around the hut, but after having been engaged in conversation by the sukya they return to the bush whence they had come. In order to induce them to depart some of the men make a strange noise on a flute (*yul*) made from the *kliaú* reed and having some beeswax applied to the mouthpiece. As soon as they have left the women dry their tears, and they are again as happy as before, for they know now that their deceased relative will within a short time arrive safely at the land of hereafter.

The head and shoulder piece of the masquerade dress is made of a piece of tanned skin or of the inner bark of certain trees; it is painted red and black. Holes are made in the part covering the face to correspond to the wearer's eyes. Dry grass is used to simulate hair, while a crinolinelike fringe of palm leaves depends from the shoulder piece, so that nothing but the legs of the wearer are visible. The headpiece is surmounted by an upright bar of light wood with the likeness (*lilka*) of a certain animal or object. All

[1] [At the festival of the dead – Analyst]

2: Kirchhoff E-4 (no date) 1948
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is an elaboration of aboriginal customs, encouraged by the English. Early records indicate that the *Sumo*, *Paya*, and *Jicaque* developed similar but perhaps less complicated organizations in order to resist the Spanish Conquest. Probably they too had waged war previous to the 16th century, but available data do not permit identification of aboriginal customs.

Among the *Mosquito* and *Sumo* all men were potential warriors. They were arranged according to military ranks, which were distinguished by feather insignia. The warriors, particularly of the *Sumo*, were subject to severe tests including dietary restrictions, and they celebrated various ceremonies. Women were not permitted to attend these ceremonies, and the warriors were not supposed to have any relations with women. Before a battle shamans were consulted. The warriors, painted black, usually attacked the enemy at night. The *Mosquito* took prisoners to be sold as slaves to the Whites. The *Sumo* killed as many of the enemy as possible. They mutilated the corpses and wore the teeth and fingernails as trophies. Some of the *Sumo* reputedly ate the roasted flesh of their enemies in order to inflict further insult upon them and to make sure that they were completely destroyed.

ESTHETIC AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Dances and music.—All ceremonies are the time for much intoxication, dancing, and singing. On frequent occasions the *Mosquito* sing in groups or singly. There are many kinds of dances, some of them specially for women and others for particular ceremonies. There are two types of drums: a goblet-shaped drum used in funeral and memorial ceremonies and a drum of European origin which is used in some of the ceremonies and, perhaps, as a signal drum. Conch-shell trumpets and reed or bone flutes with one to four stops are blown. *Sumo* and *Mosquito* shamans use flutes 6 feet (2 m.) long. The musical bow, with or without a gourd sounding box, is played by women. Gourd rattles are also used.

RELIGION

The *Sumo*, *Mosquito*, and *Paya* believe in a deity, called "Our Father," who lives in the sky. He is little interested in mankind, is too far removed to be approached by humans, and has little influence upon human affairs. The sun, moon, and stars, especially the Pleiades, are considered to be supernatural beings. They figure in the mythology and are of some significance in the religious philosophy. Solar and lunar eclipses, thunder, wind, the rainbow, and other celestial phenomena are explained by myths. The last three are the agents of the major deities.

A *Sumo* creation myth recounts the activities of two brothers who made the animals out of maize cobs. People are believed to have been made from rays of the sun. The *Paya* believe that their god sowed men in the